



City of Rockville

MEMORANDUM

February 3, 2009

TO: Scott Ullery, City Manager

FROM: Jenny Kimball, Assistant City Manager

SUBJECT: Second Quarter Report on the Mayor and Council Vision Priorities

This memo summarizes the status of projects, programs and initiatives that support the Mayor and Council's vision priorities for 2008 – 2010. It describes work completed through the second quarter of FY 2009 in the following categories:

- Distinct Neighborhoods, One City
- A Cultural Destination
- Green City
- Quality Built Environment
- Exceptional City Services
- Economic Development and Sustainability
- Community Engagement

Staff recommends that the Mayor and Council review this memo and project tracking sheets, and direct staff to follow up on any questions or additional information needed.

Distinct Neighborhoods, One City

Pedestrian Safety

Sidewalk links were completed on the following streets this fiscal year: First Street, Taft Street, East Gude Drive, and Mannakee Street. Six additional sidewalk links are currently under design. The third and final portion of the Beall Avenue Sidewalk project is also moving forward. The detailed design is complete and will be shared with the community for a public comment period the first two weeks of February. A City contractor will build the sidewalk in summer 2009.

Staff also awarded a contract to complete an assessment of the 117 signalized intersections in the City and 54 uncontrolled crosswalks near schools, metro stations, community facilities and shopping centers. The contractor will complete the inventory and assessment in early spring 2009 and prepare a report to be presented to the Mayor and Council in May. The report will result in recommendations for pedestrian safety improvements across the City.

In October 2008, the Mayor and Council directed staff to follow a “Complete Streets” approach to transportation and pedestrian planning. Staff is developing a Complete Streets policy that will ensure that City streets are routinely designed, upgraded and operated to enable safe access for all users. Staff will share a draft policy with the Traffic and Transportation Commission and the public this spring. Staff will schedule a briefing for the Mayor and Council in summer 2009.

Pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements are also planned at the Sister City Friendship Bridge over I-270. The project includes improving lighting and extending a pathway from Crofton Hill Lane to Darnestown Road. Staff is waiting for State Highway Administration approval before securing a contractor to complete the work in summer 2009.

The City received a \$149,000 pedestrian safety grant from the State Highway Administration to install pedestrian countdown signals at all City owned signalized intersections. The new countdown signals will be installed in May 2009.

Project tracking sheets for the following pedestrian safety related projects are attached to this memo:

- Pedestrian Safety – Sidewalk Links (page B-1)
- Beall Avenue Sidewalk (page B-3)
- Intersection Inventory and Pedestrian Safety Assessment (page B-5)
- Pedestrian/Bikeway System Improvements (page B-6)
- Pedestrian Safety Grant (page B-7)
- Rockville Intermodal Access: Baltimore Road and Roadside Improvements (page B-9)

Town Center Shuttle Service

Montgomery County is placing a Rockville design on buses that will travel Ride On Route #45. The specially painted buses, designated the Town Center Shuttle, are tentatively scheduled to begin operating on February 16, 2009. The artwork and picture of the new bus appeared on page 1 of the February Rockville Reports. A project tracking sheet is attached at page B-12.

Photo Radar

In November 2008, we extended the contract with our photo radar vendor until February 2011. The Photo Speed Advisory Committee reconvened in November and identified 25 new mobile camera sites on 14 roadways. During the month of December 2008, staff

conducted a public awareness campaign advertising the 14 new roadways. The Police Department began deploying the mobile speed vans to the new locations on December 22, 2008. After a warning period, drivers exceeding the speed limit by 11 mph began receiving citations. Staff is now exploring the addition of six new fixed site cameras. A project tracking sheet for the photo radar program is attached at page B-14.

Data indicates that the photo radar program has successfully lowered driver speeds. We saw a 25% reduction in the mean speed on Baltimore Road (from 32 mph to 24.1 mph) and a 15% reduction in the mean speed on Wootton Parkway (from 27.4 mph to 23.3 mph) during the first 12 months of fixed camera operation. The number of citations issued has also decreased. For example, at the Baltimore Road camera location the number of citations dropped from 6,906 to 1,233 in a one year period.

The FY 2009 budget allocates photo radar revenue to pedestrian safety CIP projects, the Intersection Inventory and Pedestrian Safety Assessment project, new pedestrian signals, police officers assigned to the Traffic Unit, and a 0.5 FTE in the Department of Public Works to complete sidewalk and other pedestrian safety projects.

Governor O'Malley is introducing a bill this legislative session that would allow speed cameras statewide in residential areas and work zones. That bill would replace the legislation passed last year that permitted the speed camera program in Montgomery County.

Under the legislation passed last year, Montgomery County and municipalities use speed camera revenue to cover the operating costs of the program and retain any additional revenue for spending on public safety programs and projects related to traffic and pedestrian safety. Similar to last year, there is significant risk that the legislature could change the program to allow the State to retain all revenue above the amount needed for operating costs. That change would significantly reduce the funds available to implement the City's plans to improve traffic and pedestrian safety. Staff will keep the Mayor and Council informed about the status of the Governor's speed camera bill.

Neighborhood Event Programming

Staff coordinated with neighborhood associations to hold the following holiday events in December 2008:

- Woodley Gardens West Annual Holiday Party - The community received a Neighborhood Matching Grant to help fund the event.
- Home for the Holidays in Lincoln Park - The City provided the facility and decorations for the event. Staff also helped to coordinate between the two hosting neighborhood associations and with outreach to neighborhood residents.
- East Rockville's Wacky Winter Wonderland Cabin Fever Contest - Neighborhood Resources staff developed the concept for the event with the community and provided guidance to neighborhood organizers.

The City also sponsored a New Years Eve dance for middle school children. The Lincoln Park Community Center hosted the event, and organized decorations, music, and food. Staff also engaged the community and the neighborhood associations in the event.

MCPS School Boundaries

Later this spring, we will initiate a project to investigate the feasibility of all Rockville students attending schools within the City limits, and develop an appropriate strategy to pursue that goal. Upon receiving the results of staff's investigation, and in furtherance of an adopted strategy, the Mayor and Council may wish to schedule a worksession with MPCS officials.

A Cultural Destination

Culture and Entertainment Plan

The Mayor and Council allocated \$30,000 in the Recreation and Parks CIP to begin the development of a Culture and Entertainment Plan. As a first step in developing a plan, staff issued an RFP to obtain the services of a consultant to:

- Inventory existing cultural and entertainment resources in Rockville and the region,
- Interview up to forty providers of cultural arts programs and services in the region,
- Identify and research twelve cultural arts plans developed by other communities,
- Analyze the costs and benefits of Rockville becoming part of the Montgomery County Heritage Area and Rockville's role in the strategic planning process for the Montgomery County Arts and Humanities Council (including the option of developing an Arts and Entertainment District).

Two firms responded to the RFP. A contract award memo has been submitted to the Purchasing Division. The work will begin in earnest in early or mid-February. If the consultant performs successfully, staff anticipates using the same firm to assist with the next phases of developing the Culture and Entertainment plan for the City.

Science Center

An enthusiastic group of volunteers is moving forward with the development of a Science Center. Three people stepped up to form the initial Board of Trustees:

- Edward Eisenstein, Director of the Center for Advanced Research in Biotechnology (CARB) at University of Maryland, Shady Grove
- Bob Ekman, Rockville Consortium for Science
- Jennifer Kaye, Rockville resident

Councilmember Marcuccio also attends most meetings of the group, which is ably assisted by Dr. Robert "Mac" West, of Informal Learning Experiences, Inc., (ILE) of Washington, D.C. ILE is the firm that worked with the City in 2005 and 2006 to produce the Science Center Feasibility Study. The City is funding the ILE consulting contract.

The group has been working diligently to complete the filing papers for the IRS nonprofit corporation status, as well as to draft the by-laws for the corporation, with the assistance of the City Attorney's Office in creating and filing these corporation documents. The group is also researching potential additional board members and planning to roll out a number of "Science Café's," the first of which was held on January 27, 2009. The Cafés will help to raise awareness of the ongoing efforts to establish a Science Center.

Green City

Rockville's Sustainability Strategy

Implementation of the City's Sustainability Strategy continues. On December 15, 2008, the Mayor and Council adopted comprehensive revisions to the City's Zoning Ordinance. The new zoning ordinance is substantially greener than the previous version and will complement the green building codes now being developed jointly by Environmental Management and the Inspection Services Division.

City staff has been informed that the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is prepared to provide at least \$150,000 in grant funds to retrofit 10 diesel vehicles with a device that reduces air pollution. MDE had assisted the City in preparing the federal grant application that was turned down by EPA. The State thought our submission was so strong that MDE is going to provide a large portion of the money we sought from the federal government. Subject to signing a memorandum of agreement in the next few weeks, we expect to bring a budget amendment to accept the MDE grant to the Mayor and Council on February 23, 2009.

The Environment Commission has taken favorable action on an environmental excellence award for the tree program implemented by the New Mark Commons neighborhood. The Mayor and Council will present the award to the neighborhood on February 23, 2009.

Environmental Education

The lower level of the Croydon Creek Nature Center will serve an environmental education function starting in the summer of 2009. The Recreation and Parks Department renovated the space to create a classroom and exhibit area. Exhibits will focus on Croydon Creek, the Rock Creek watershed, and the Chesapeake Bay. Nature Center staff selected a firm to design and prepare the exhibit space. The firm will begin the work in April and conclude in July 2009. A project tracking sheet is at page B-17.

Stormwater Management Utility Implementation

In April 2008, the Mayor and Council adopted a Stormwater Management Utility ordinance, regulations and rate schedule resolution. Since that time, the City's consultant has been calculating final rates and working with Montgomery County to integrate the City fee as a line item on the property tax bills. City residents will receive the first SWM utility bill on the County tax bills to be sent in July 2009.

Staff sent 506 letters to notify commercial property owners, governments and institutions (including Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery College, Montgomery County, churches) and community associations that own common property of the stormwater management fee that will appear on their property tax bill. We received 47 inquiries in response to the mailing. Some property owners were not familiar with the SMW Utility and requested basic information. Most owners requested information about the amount of impervious surface on their property and the calculation of the fee. Other property owners sought information about credits for their onsite SWM facilities. Staff received positive feedback about the maps and information provided.

The Mayor and Council will consider a resolution to set the FY10 SWM fee rate schedule as part of the FY10 budget adoption in May. In preparation for FY10 budget worksessions, staff is examining options to modify the approved program to reduce program costs. Options considered will not compromise our ability to comply with state and federal regulatory mandates, but should reduce the SWM fee charged to property owners. A project tracking sheet is at page B-18.

Recycling and Refuse Implementation

A project tracking sheet for the recycling and refuse program implementation project is attached at page B-20. The Department of Public Works implemented Phase I of the new system on October 27. The neighborhoods included in Phase I include Big Oak Court, Burgundy Knolls, David Scull Court, East Rockville, Falls Ridge, Lincoln Park, Lynfield, Orchard Ridge, Potomac Springs, Potomac Woods, Redgate Farms, Rose Hill, Rose Hill Falls, Waddington Park, and most of Burgundy Estates and Horizon Hill.

Phase I implementation went smoothly and planning is underway for phases II, III and IV. Staff expects full implementation across all City neighborhoods to be complete by the end of calendar year 2009.

Eradicating Invasive Species

Public Works and Recreation and Parks staff are developing a policy to reduce the prevalence and negative impacts of non-native, invasive species in our community. The Invasive Species Management Policy will provide guidance on how to address invasive species in City parks, an approach to incorporating invasive species eradication in City CIP projects (e.g., stream restoration projects) and requirements for invasive species control in private development.

Quality Built Environment

Zoning Ordinance Implementation

The Zoning Ordinance was adopted on December 15, 2008. Staff is now developing processes, procedures, letters, forms and training to prepare for formal implementation of the new Ordinance on March 16, 2009.

Comprehensive Master Plan Review

During the second quarter of FY09, CPDS staff conducted an internal staff review of the Plan and began reaching out to the community for input. Staff also briefed and collected input from the Traffic and Transportation Commission, Historic District Commission, Environment Commission, Cultural Arts Commission, Senior Citizens Commission, Recreation and Parks Advisory Board, the Town Center Action Team, and the board of the Rockville Economic Development Inc.

The next step involves Planning Commission review and discussion of the staff audit and continued community outreach. The Planning Commission will recommend to the Mayor and Council later this year whether to conduct a minor revision or major revision of the City's Comprehensive Master Plan.

Rockville Pike Corridor Plan

The City's consultant team completed a preliminary draft of the Rockville Pike Corridor Plan for City staff review. Staff prepared comments on the preliminary draft and discussed them with the consultant team. Staff expects to receive the consultants' second draft Plan the third week of February. Staff and consultants will present the draft to the community, the Planning Commission and the Mayor and Council in April 2009. A project tracking sheet is attached at page B-25.

College Gardens Park and Pond

The Mayor and Council approved a contract for the College Gardens Park and Pond construction in December 2008 and construction began the first week of January 2009. The park and pond improvements will be complete in August 2009. Related stream restoration work is also underway and will be complete at the end of February 2009. A project tracking sheet is attached at page B-28.

Mattie Stepanek Park

A successful grand opening event was held on October 18. Construction of the second and third phases of the park is underway and will be complete in April 2009. Phases II and III include installation of parking lots, football field, basketball/tennis courts, snack bar/restaurant/storage, scoreboard, bleachers, softball backstop, lighting, paths and landscaping. A project tracking sheet is at page B-30.

Thomas Farm Community Center

The Mayor and Council were invited to visit the new Center for the soft opening on February 2. Exercise classes and open houses began that week. A Valentines' Day Square Dance was held on February 6. A dedication event will take place in late March or early April.

Street Lighting Improvements

The FY09 budget includes funds to install 70 new streetlights in the neighborhoods east of Route 355. Staff sent a request to Pepco for a cost estimate for that work in July 2008 and started to receive (and approve) proposals. Staff anticipates installation of the new streetlights by the end of June 2009. Streetlights in the Fallsbend neighborhood will also be upgraded in the spring of 2009.

Pepco is supplementing Rockville's lighting efforts by replacing the bulbs in all of the Pepco-owned lights in Rockville. As bulbs age, they fade and produce less light. The new bulbs will address that problem. Pepco's bulb replacement is expected to be complete by the end of calendar year 2009. Rockville is also considering participating in a Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments demonstration project to use new energy efficient bulbs in streetlights.

Exceptional City Services

City Police Station

On October 20, 2008, the City celebrated the acquisition of the old post office for conversion to a City Police Station. In November 2008, the City awarded a continuation of the architectural/ engineering contract to Wheeler Goodman Masek Associates for the next phase of design for the site, the annex building and for the renovations to the existing post office building. Designs will be shared with the Historic District and Planning Commissions in March, and with the Mayor and Council in late spring or early summer 2009.

The project will proceed in two phases, beginning with the renovations to the existing post office building, followed by work on the annex building. City dollars will fund the renovations to the existing building. Rockville's FY10 federal funding request includes \$2.5 million to fund the construction of the annex building. A State Bond Bill has also been proposed in the amount of \$500,000. A project tracking sheet is attached at page B-33.

Gude Drive Maintenance Facility Improvements – Phase II

In FY 08, the City completed improvements to the salt dome and stormwater management pond at the Gude Drive Maintenance Facility. Phase II improvements include the final design and construction of a new Motor Vehicle Maintenance (MVM) building and new administrative offices, modifications to the existing MVM building and existing office building, and additional parking. The project will provide needed staff work space and a more suitable maintenance area for the City's current fleet.

Staff is also considering designing the new office space to accommodate the entire Public Works Department. That would allow the department to consolidate all divisions and employees at one location and open space at City Hall for other uses. Analysis of that option is underway.

The design process is underway for Phase II. Planning Commission review and issuance of a USE permit is expected in May 2009. A project tracking sheet is on page B-37.

Residential Water Meter Replacement Program

Phase I of the residential water meter replacement program is complete with 5,000 meters replaced. The contractor will return in May 2009 to complete Phase II by replacing approximately 6,000 additional residential meters.

Water Main Rehabilitation

Construction is underway on water line replacements on Lewis Avenue, Highland Road and Matthews Drive. Construction will start in March 2009 on the next set of pipe replacements, including North Horners Lane, Reading Terrace, Lincoln Street, and Thorndon Street. Design work for pipe replacements is underway for Rockland, Stonestreet/Ashley, and Broadwood. A detailed outline of the progress on each portion of the rehabilitation project is attached at page B-39.

Staff is pursuing \$16.6 million from the Federal Economic Recovery Package to support the City's Water Main Rehabilitation project. The City's request was sent to our Congressional Delegation and Governor Martin O'Malley in January 2009. The City's lobbyist, Holland and Knight, is assisting in the process to secure the funds.

This project is also included in Rockville's FY10 Federal Appropriations request. This is the regular federal appropriations process that occurs annually. The FY10 appropriations request for this project totals \$7.9 million. The funding is allocated via earmarks through the state. Holland and Knight reports that these funds should be available by April 2010.

Federal Funding Request

The Mayor and Council received a full briefing on the City's efforts to acquire federal funding on January 26, 2009. At that meeting, the Mayor and Council approved the recommended projects for the FY10 Federal Appropriations and the 2009 Transportation Equity Act (TEA) Reauthorization. The next steps include preparing white papers and

the TEA proposals to transmit to the Congressional Delegation, followed by meetings with the delegation in February 2009.

The FY10 Proposed Budget for the City Manager's Office will include \$140,000 for a contract for lobbying services. The lobbying firm will help Rockville identify funding opportunities, guide the City through the state and federal appropriations cycles, recommend courses of action, assist with the logistics of providing testimony and arranging appointments, and provide written reports describing current legislative activities. The lobbying contract gives Rockville a constant presence in Annapolis and on Capital Hill, and provides a level of expertise that is not available from City staff.

Since FY05, the assistance provided by the current lobbying firm, Holland and Knight, led to federal and state funding totaling \$9.01 million for the following projects:

- Town Square,
- Town Center shuttle,
- Baltimore Road improvements,
- Senior Center expansion,
- Thomas Farm Community Center construction, and
- COPS technology.

In FY10, funds for lobbying services will help Rockville acquire additional federal funds through the economic stimulus package and the reauthorization of the federal Transportation Equity Act.

2009 Citizen Survey

The City's survey consultant delivered a final report of results for the 2009 Citizen Survey on January 30. The consultant received 837 completed surveys, for a response rate of 44%, which is identical to the response rate from the City's last citizen survey. Staff is reviewing and analyzing the results and will provide a preliminary overview to the Mayor and Council with the budget preview scheduled for February 23, 2009. A full briefing and discussion of the survey results with the Mayor and Council will be held in March 2009. A project tracking sheet is attached at page B-40.

Analysis of Governance Issues

The Mayor and Council vision addresses governance issues, including the City Council size, term length, term concurrence, and at-large representation. The Mayor and Council briefly discussed term length at their meeting on October 6, 2008.

Interaction with Boards and Commissions

A Work Group formed by the Mayor and Council to review certain aspects of the appointment and reappointment process for Boards and Commissions was formed in November 2008. The Work Group met on December 10 and January 21. Another meeting is planned for February 23. The group will complete their work and share recommendations with the Mayor and Council in April 2009. If any recommendations involve changing the City Code, it will require Mayor and Council action.

Economic Development and Sustainability

City Branding Campaign

Staff is developing an agenda item to initiate a discussion with the Mayor and Council of the City branding campaign. That meeting will result in direction to staff to prepare an RFP for community branding research and strategy development. A project tracking sheet that outlines specific tasks to be completed is attached at page B-44.

Community Engagement

E-Newsletter

Staff continues to send weekly e-newsletters that update residents on events happening across Rockville. The e-newsletter subscriber list increased from 45 addresses in August 2008 to 273 subscribers in January 2009. In addition, a new e-newsletter went to the 14,881 RockEnroll subscribers to promote the Winter Recreation Guide.

Web Site Redesign

On January 26, staff shared a preview of the new home page with the Mayor and Council. Information about the new page was also included in the February Rockville Reports. The next step is to conduct community and staff focus groups to gather input on the recent changes and future improvements to the City web site. Staff across the City also continually reviews department specific pages to ensure the web content is updated.

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